

Tonight, brothers and sisters, I have a couple of things I want to cover with you. The first goes to a statement by the prophet Joseph Smith that he made in The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pg 307-308. It has to do with the gathering of Israel. I'm also using a scripture from 1 Nephi. Joseph said this, "What was the object of gathering the ... people of God in any age of the world?"

Now, the Article of Faith #10 talks about the gathering of Israel under the keys that were restored by Moses in the Kirtland Temple. The gathering has been the main subject of the restoration of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but Joseph gives us a little different view. He says, "... The main object was to build unto the Lord a house whereby He could reveal unto His people the ordinances of His house and the glories of His kingdom, and teach the people the way of salvation; for there are certain ordinances and principles that, when they are taught and practiced, must be done in a place or house built for that purpose."

The purpose of the gathering, and every time you read the word "gathering" as it pertains to now--in the present, and in the future, and, really for the past, it was to bring a group of people together for the purpose of building that temple so the Lord could reveal ordinances in His house that could only be done there. One of the ordinances I want to talk to you about is called "the fullness of the Melchizedek Priesthood". In the book, "The Words of Joseph Smith" pg 215, by Ehat & Cook 1980, the Prophet J.S. said, "The purpose of the gathering was to bestow the fullness of the priesthood." So now, you have 2 things that point towards the purpose of temples and the gathering of Israel in any age of the world. Since that gathering is still going on, and even greater gatherings are going to take place, especially after the world falls into chaos, as it has been prophesied. Then there are a group of rescuers that we refer to as the "144,000", and others who will be sent out into a chaotic world, in the middle of anarchy and blood and horror. Their job will be to gather pockets of stranded people who qualify to come to a safe place of the New Jerusalem, and to bring them there with songs of everlasting joy and rejoicing upon their head. Isaiah talked a lot about that. We're talking tonight about the fullness of the priesthood, and the prophet Joseph Smith said, "The fullness of the priesthood can only be revealed in temples built for that purpose, and that the purpose of the gathering is to bring people together to build the temple so that the fullness of the Melchizedek Priesthood can be bestowed upon them."

I want to read a scripture to you, and it's in D&C Section 124:26-27 (Given October 27, 1838. The LDS had been driven out of Missouri, had crossed the river, you can see it's almost winter time here, came into Quincy, IL for a while, then moved on up to Commerce, IL. They hadn't been there very long. Commerce would later be called Nauvoo. They aren't there very long when we get vs. 27, and the Lord says this, and the previous verses tie in with this, and it's a call to gather people.)
26 And send ye swift messengers, yea, chosen messengers, and say unto them: Come ye, with all your gold, and your silver, and your precious stones, and with all your antiquities; and with all who have knowledge of antiquities, that will come, may come, and bring the box tree, and the fir tree, and the pine tree, together with all the precious trees of the earth; 27 And with iron, with copper, and with brass, and with zinc, and with all your precious things of the earth; and build a house to my name, for the Most High to dwell therein.

See, it's a call to gather there and build a temple in Nauvoo, IL. For what purpose? Vs. 28: *For there is not a place found on earth that he (God/Christ) may come to and restore again that which was lost unto you, or which he hath taken away, even the fulness of the priesthood.* There's that quote. Now here's a little statement about "What is the fullness of the priesthood?" What does that mean? Actually, it's a term that ties in with several other terms that we've talked about in these classes. Let me read to you this little statement by Joseph Fielding Smith, from a conference report from April 1970, and he talks about the fullness of the priesthood. He says this, "In 1841 the Lord revealed to the prophet that "the fullness of the priesthood" was available to men only in the temple, in "a house" built to his name. (D&C 124:28,31) And in 1843 the Prophet said: "If a man gets a fulness of the priesthood of God, he has to get it in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, (Isn't that an interesting statement? Again, following the footsteps of the Savior.) and that was by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the house of the Lord." (*Documentary History of the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 244.)

Some people have questions as to whether Jesus was married. Well, that statement right there, for LDS, should lay it to rest. Jesus received the "fulness of the priesthood", and he received it by keeping all of the commandments and observing and obeying all the ordinances in the House of the Lord. Well, what's the most sacred ordinance performed in the temple? The sealing between a man and a woman. That lays that to rest. That quote is from The Documentary History of the Church Vol 5, pg 244. Then, Pres. Joseph Fielding Smith goes on and says, "*Let me put this in a little different way. I do not care what office you hold in the Church—you may be an apostle, you may be a patriarch, a high priest, or anything else—but you cannot receive the fulness of the priesthood and the fulness of eternal reward unless you receive the ordinances of the house of the Lord.*" Notice the underlined phrase! How important is it for you to go and receive your initiatory ordinance? How important is it for you to obtain the endowment blessing of the temple? Pres. Smith says that if you want a fulness of the priesthood, these ordinances and what takes place in the House of the Lord are absolutely necessary. President Smith continues and says, "*and when you receive these ordinances, the door is then open so you can obtain all the blessings which any man can gain. Do not think because someone has a higher office in the Church than you have that you are barred from receiving the fulness of the Lord's blessings. You can have them sealed upon you as an elder, if you are faithful; and when you receive them, and live faithfully and keep these covenants, you then have all that any man can get.*" (I want to add, also, that because you are a

woman, do not think that you are barred from receiving these blessings.) "You can have them sealed upon you as an elder; if you are faithful. When you receive them, and live faithful, and keep these covenants, (this part right here) you then have all that any man can get."

There's a question that comes up as to whether the blessings of the fulness of the priesthood are available to women separately. The blessings of the fulness of the priesthood are, as follows: You obtain a promise from God, from his own mouth, spoken to you, calling you by name, that you shall/can have eternal life. The judgment day is advanced in your behalf. You can obtain that promise through the 'more sure word of prophecy', which is another way of saying, 'conversing with the Lord through the veil'. You can have your calling and election made sure as a separate man or a separate woman. You can obtain the second comforter blessings as a separate man or a separate woman. Now, in order to enter into the Celestial Kingdom and obtain all that the Father has, and one of those blessings is to have the blessings of eternal increase, meaning spirit children in and after the resurrection of the dead, that's going to require a couple to have that sealing blessing of husband and wife. But these other blessings, ie. to see the face of the Lord in this life, to embrace with Him, to have a personal encounter with Him, and part of that, to discuss and converse with Him through the veil and then obtain these blessings. Single women and single men can obtain those blessings.

President Smith goes on and says this, "*There is no exaltation in the kingdom of God without the fulness of the priesthood, and every man who receives the Melchizedek Priesthood does so with an oath and a covenant that he shall be exalted. The covenant on man's part is that (1) he will magnify his calling in the priesthood (D&C 84:33), and that (2) he will live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God, and that (3) he will keep the commandments. (Matt. 4:4) The covenant on the Lord's part is that if man does as he promises, then all that the Father hath shall be given unto him (D&C 84:38); and this is such a solemn and important promise that the Lord swears with an oath that it shall come to pass. (D&C 84:39)*"

So, this is the purpose of gathering in all ages of the world, to bring people in to a place that they can go to the temple, and they can see the face of God, and have all of these blessings bestowed upon them, while still mortals in this life. I want to share with you what happened this week. I was reading in the B of M. I'd like you to go over to 3 Nephi 8. If you know these principles, then you can start to see things in the scriptures that are just magnificent. Scriptures come alive. This is that chapter where the prophecies of Samuel the Lamanite are actually fulfilled. We have a physical fulfillment of the prophecies of Samuel the Lamanite. Let's go to vs. 1 for a minute. Think back on our lesson last week on Justification. Remember what we taught? If you can't remember, you might want to go back and review it, but look at what vs. 1 says: *1 And now it came to pass that according to our record, and we know our record to be true, for behold, it was a just man* (There's that clue. Whenever you hear that, this is a person who has been justified through the atonement of Jesus Christ, and we talked about that.) *who did keep the record—* (Now watch, here's what a just man and a just woman can do.) *for he truly did many miracles in the name of Jesus;* (Justification opens the door for miracles to occur.) *and there was not any man who could do a miracle in the name of Jesus* (Now, keep in mind what justification means.) *save he were cleansed every whit from his iniquity—*

That is a great scripture that shows you certain things: what a just man is and what they can accomplish, and why. I want to throw in here a little scripture by the prophet Joseph Smith. It goes into our discussion here tonight, overall. Speaking to LDS, he said, "I beseech you to go on to perfection." Now, we have a podcast on "being perfect in Christ". There might be a little confusion, because a lot of LDS will teach and declare that it's impossible to be perfect in this life, but when Jesus said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect" and 3 Nephi 8 when he says, "Be ye therefore perfect even as I and your Father in Heaven are perfect." We want to push that on into eternity and say "that's impossible to do in this life". No, it's not. Actually, you have a commandment to be perfect in this life, and we gave a whole lesson on that. I want you to notice the correlation between the miracles and what we read here. So, the prophet Joseph Smith says this, "I beseech you to go on to perfection, and search deeper and deeper into the mysteries of God."

Now, if you look at that comment, and you want to obtain the perfection that we're commanded to obtain, you go to Moroni 10 and look at the last 2-3 verses there, and, it's a commandment. *32 Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God.*

That's not referring to after this life, or into the spirit world, or into some assigned kingdom after the resurrection of the dead. We have a commandment to be perfect in this life. Joseph is talking about how perfection is tied into "knowing the mysteries of God". In other words, if you could reverse that and say, the perfection that the Father and the Son want their children to obtain in this life, cannot be obtained without a knowledge of the mysteries. We've hit on that theme several times.

Let's go back into 3 Nephi 8:5 and the record that this just man is keeping in vs. 5 says, "*5 And it came to pass in the thirty and fourth year, (This part right here) in the first month, on the fourth day of the month, there arose a great storm, such an one as never had been known in all the land.*

Notice that in the beginning, the first month of the 34th year, whatever that is according to Nephi, that's all we know that it's their 34th year, 1st month, this storm arises. Of course we know what happens, as you have tremendous lightnings, tempests, fires, and you have huge mountains that are picked up they bury cities. Vs. 12 comes out and says, "*12 But behold, there was a more great and terrible destruction in the land northward; for behold, (this part) the whole face of the land was*

changed, because of the tempest and the whirlwinds, and the thunderings and the lightnings, and the exceedingly great quaking of the whole earth;" This storm and destruction goes on for a period of 3 hours. I love it, up in vs. 19: "they did last for about the space of three hours; (and this right here) and it was said by some that the time was greater;(I thought that was an interesting thing) nevertheless, all these great and terrible things were done in about the space of three hours—and then behold, there was darkness upon the face of the land".

Have you ever been in a situation where you were in stress or turmoil, and someone said, "Hey, that lasted about 10 minutes"? But, to you it seemed like about 5 hours. I was in the Northridge, CA earthquake. I was in the Marriott Hotel on the 12th floor on Century Blvd., not far from where that earthquake was. I do not go back to CA easily, because I was so traumatized in that huge earthquake. I can't even explain to you what it was like to be in that room at 4 a.m. when that earthquake hit. I fully expected that when it finally settled down, to open the door to our hotel room, and look 12 floors straight down into the parking lot. I just could not see how the rest of the building could withstand what we'd just gone through. It seemed like it never ended, and yet, the whole thing lasted about 22 seconds! It seemed to go on and on.....so I relate to this deal. Now, in vs. 23 it says that the darkness lasted for 3 days. It's always interesting to me, and there's a B of M class that I did in the Philippines on numerology, and these numbers have significance. You had 3 hours, then you had 3 days. There's a reason why it's 3 hours and not 4 hours and it's 3 days, and not 6 days. God uses numbers to teach us certain things, but that's another lesson.

So, now I want to show you something. After that darkness goes away, they hear the voice of Christ in the darkness. If you look at your heading for chapter 10, it says, "There is silence in the land for many hours—The voice of Christ promises to gather His people as a hen gathers her chickens—The more righteous part of the people have been preserved. About A.D. 34–35". That's a significant thing, for Christ promising to gather His people. I had never seen this until I studied it this week, and the Holy Spirit pointed this out to me, and I knew I needed to share with you. Notice that we've been talking about the gathering tonight, and here you have this tremendous destruction that takes place, and then after that, the people hear a voice in the darkness. When you hear the voice of God, but don't see Him, if that happens to you, no matter where it is, you are obtaining what is called the "more sure word of prophecy". You are on track, very close, to obtaining the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and have a very very intimate and significant encounter with the Lord, Jesus Christ. Well, after that darkness passed away, if you look at vs. 9 in chapter 10 it says, "9 And it came to pass that thus did the three days pass away. And it was in the morning, and the darkness dispersed from off the face of the land, and the earth did cease to tremble, and the rocks did cease to rend, and the dreadful groanings did cease, and all the tumultuous noises did pass away."

In those previous verses, though, the Lord comes out and starting in 10:4 he says, "O ye people of these great cities which have fallen, who are descendants of Jacob, yea, who are of the house of Israel, (this part right here) how oft have I gathered you (Now think about what we've talked about 'gatherings' all through time, from Adam up to this point. The purpose of gathering is to bring people together, to build a house, a temple, wherein the fulness of the ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood can be bestowed on the people's heads.) as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and have nourished you." Notice what he said, "how oft have I gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings" and this part "and have nourished you." Interesting statement.

5 And again, how oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, yea, O ye people of the house of Israel, who have fallen; yea, O ye people of the house of Israel, ye that dwell at Jerusalem, as ye that have fallen; yea, how oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens, and ye would not.

And, then you see at the top of vs. 6 O ye house of Israel whom I have spared, how oft will I gather you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, if ye will repent and return unto me with full purpose of heart.

7 But if not, (watch what happens--what happens if you refuse the call to gather, either in the past or in the future) O house of Israel, the places of your dwellings shall become desolate until the time of the fulfilling of the covenant to your fathers. Desolate means, void of life. You lose every thing that you could have had, or the promises that were available to you, because you will not harken to the voices of God: you rebel, harden your heart and do not come to Him.

Now, in chapter 11 we have the appearance of Jesus Christ among the Nephites. Here's something interesting that a lot of people don't know. Go to 3 Nephi 10:18. Think about what we've done. 18 And it came to pass that in the ending of the thirty and fourth year. (So, from 3 Nephi 8:5 where the storm ends in the beginning of the 34th year, then you're almost a year later in 3 Nephi 10:18 where it's in the ending of the 34th year) behold, I will show unto you that the people of Nephi who were spared, and also those who had been called Lamanites, who had been spared, did have great favors shown unto them, and great blessings poured out upon their heads, insomuch that soon after the ascension of Christ into heaven (And you can read about that in Acts of N.T.) he did truly manifest himself unto them— 19 Showing his body unto them, and ministering unto them; and an account of his ministry shall be given hereafter. Therefore for this time I make an end of my sayings.

Brothers and sisters, here's the thing. You've got almost a year between when the storm starts and when Christ appears among the Nephites. There was almost a complete year between that period of time. That's something that a lot of people haven't seen and it's just a fascinating thing and you ask yourself this question, "What took place in that year between when the storm ends after 3 hours, then darkness disperses after 3 days, and then it's 11+ months later, in a different place, in a place called Bountiful, which is a temple city? See, you have a political capital and you have a religious capital among the Nephites. It's the pattern of Zion in the latter-days. You have a place where just laws are administered, or should be. In this case,

Zarahemla was destroyed by fire, along with many other places. The political system had corrupted itself to such a degree that the Lord just completely wiped them out and started over. There was one other city there called Jacobugath which was especially deplorable to the Lord, because it says, " *9 And behold, that great city Jacobugath, which was inhabited by the people of king Jacob, have I caused to be burned with fire because of their sins and their wickedness, which was above all the wickedness of the whole earth, because of their secret murders and combinations; for it was they that did destroy the peace of my people and the government of the land; therefore I did cause them to be burned, to destroy them from before my face, that the blood of the prophets and the saints should not come up unto me any more against them.*" So, the failure of their political system started in this place and, like a cancer, spread throughout the whole Nephite system until the Lord had to come in and wipe it all out. Now, here's the question. We read in 3 Nephi 11:1 *And now it came to pass that there were a great multitude gathered together, of the people of Nephi, round about the temple which was in the land Bountiful;* (See, this is almost a year after the destruction ends. So, you've got to ask yourself the question. We know how many people were in this multitude because over in Chapter 11 it's going to tell us. They all came forward, one by one. And later on in 3 Nephi, it says there were 2500 people that find themselves on this day, 11 months after the darkness disperses and the destruction ends, and they had gathered at the temple city among the Nephites, which is in Bountiful. Why were they there? What brings these 2500 people to the temple? What takes place? It goes on and says:) *and they were marveling and wondering one with another, and were showing one to another the great and marvelous change which had taken place.*

We think that took place after 3 days. The way we teach it, and I taught it for years in Seminary classes that after 3 days these people were howling and bawling and lamenting about the darkness, then it disperses and Christ comes down in a beam of light and appears on the steps of the temple at Bountiful. In reality, it's a year later. These are not all the Nephites that were spared, as we're going to find out in the next 2-3 days. Christ is there for the first day and leaves, which starts in chapter 11, and the people don't sleep that night. They go throughout the whole area and "noise it abroad" and gather people for the next day when the Savior said he would come back. There were 2500 people that had a special privilege bestowed, and here's the question. What brought them, out of all the surviving Nephites, what brought them to the temple place a year later? So the whole point on this, where am I going with this? The exciting part was that in chapter 11:3, here's these 2500 Nephites that are at the temple. And, I want to tell you that, remember what the Lord says, "How often have I tried to gather you? How often will I gather you? etc..." And, He said that the purpose of the gathering is to bring people to the temple so they can receive the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood. I'm showing you an ancient example, among the Nephites, the descendants of Joseph, for this very principle that Joseph Smith was teaching, and it's playing out. Then I want to see what that means to us in our day. In vs. 3 they hear a voice and they don't recognize it. In middle of vs. 3 it says, "*it being a small voice it did pierce them that did hear to the center, insomuch that there was no part of their frame that it did not cause to quake; yea, it did pierce them to the very soul, and did cause their hearts to burn.*" And, here again, for the second time in vs. 4: "*And it came to pass that again they heard the voice, and they understood it not.*" In vs. 5, they hear it a third time! 5 "*And again the third time they did hear the voice, and did open their ears to hear it; and their eyes were towards the sound thereof; and they did look steadfastly towards heaven, from whence the sound came.*" Now, vs. 6-7 says, "*And behold, the third time they did understand the voice which they heard; and it said unto them: 7 Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him.*"

Then, in vs. 8 we see the ascension of Christ as he comes down in a shaft of light to the Nephites. This is a Second Comforter experience. Isn't it interesting that these people experienced conversing with the Lord through the veil during the 3 days of darkness. They hear the voice of Christ talking to them, but they don't see Him. That is "conversing with the Lord through the veil". That is, "obtaining the more sure word of prophecy". Then, a year later this small group finds themselves gathered to the temple in Bountiful. As they are gathered, they hear the voice of the Father and see Christ face to face. Vs. 8 *And it came to pass, as they understood they cast their eyes up again towards heaven; and behold, they saw a Man descending out of heaven; and he was clothed in a white robe; and he came down and stood in the midst of them; and the eyes of the whole multitude were turned upon him, and they durst not open their mouths, even one to another, and wist not what it meant, for they thought it was an angel that had appeared unto them.*

In 3 Nephi 11:14 He invites them to come up: "*Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world. 15 And it came to pass that the multitude went forth, and thrust their hands into his side, and did feel the prints of the nails in his hands and in his feet; and this they did do, going forth one by one until they had all gone forth, and did see with their eyes and did feel with their hands, and did know of a surety and did bear record, that it was he, of whom it was written by the prophets, that should come.*

So, what's the point? These 2500 people have an advantage by being at this place over others among this society who were spared, who do not find themselves at the temple. The advantage that they have is, they hear the voice of the Father. If you look in the middle of vs. 3 it says, "*it did pierce them that did hear to the center, insomuch that there was no part of their frame that it did not cause to quake; yea, it did pierce them to the very soul, and did cause their hearts to burn.*" Only those people, out of all the surviving Nephites, a year after the destruction, only this group of 2500 people find themselves at this place to have this experience. Because, from this point on, in the record of 3 Nephi, no one else gathered. So, the next 2 days, following this first day, have that experience. Nor, do we read about them or anybody else, think of the second and third day.

He's among the Nephites 3 days. There's that number "3" again. Only on the first day do we have a record. They hear the voice of the Father, and they are invited one by one to come up, in what is a solemn priesthood recognition ceremony, to receive an apostolic witness of the resurrected body of the Lord, Jesus Christ. You don't read about that happening on day 2 and day 3. They see Him. But, there is an advantage of having been there on the first of three days. Could it be, brothers and sisters, that they understood this doctrine of "the gathering"? Because in the night, the voice of the Lord was speaking to them in the darkness, and he talks about gathering. "Gathering, that I may nurse you." Did they understand the principle that Joseph Smith said the purpose of the gathering in any age is to build a temple. Did they have that doctrine taught among them and as a result of that, were they gathered at the temple 11.5 months later looking for something that they thought would happen because of the doctrine they understood?

I've heard all kinds of speculation as to why they were gathered at the temple there, and they may all be right. I'm just showing you how exciting that is, to show that these people who found themselves at that temple when Christ appeared there had some advantages that the other people who came later on did not experience. Anyway, it's just a fascinating experience to me on how to see the scriptures unfold and the Lord showed me that this week as I was reading.

Student asks a question. (?) Mike: How much damage was done to the temple during all the destruction or to that area around the city of Bountiful I don't know. I'm sure there must have been some damage, just like when we have tornadoes or earthquakes or something like that, some of our buildings get damaged. Then again, maybe the temple was preserved complete, I don't know. Here's the thing, though. They were gathered there marveling one with another about the mighty changes that had taken place. We automatically think those changes had to do with the physical destruction and real estate damage that was done among the Nephites, and what if that isn't what it was all about? What if they were not marveling and wondering so much about physical damage, what if they were wondering about the change that had taken place in their life, as a result of surviving this and finding themselves at the temple. What if that is the thing they were marveling about? It says they were marveling with one another about the changes that had taken place. It's just a thought. What if those changes were not physical or geographical or real estate: What if they were changes of the heart? Because those people who have gone through this, I'll guarantee you, are not the same people that went in to it. There were some huge changes.

Now, back to the fulness of the priesthood. What have you gathered here today? You have to have a temple place in order for these ordinances to be bestowed. Now, we talked about 'calling and election', 'more sure word of prophecy' can be bestowed upon you by God, and it can be done personally, wherever He chooses. It does not have to be inside a temple. The temple ordinances, it appears, from what the prophets have written, the ordinances of initiatory and the endowment ceremony, and everything that takes place, and the knowledge that is gained in there, are necessary in order for you to come to a point where you converse with the Lord through the veil. It's interesting that that doesn't take place until the initiatory is done symbolically in the temple. You don't obtain the more sure word of prophecy, you don't obtain the fulness of the priesthood, and different things like that, without the temple ordinances. That's what the prophets have spoken. That's what they've said. You enter into a new order of things through the temple. So, anyway, I wanted to share that with you. Any questions or comments about 'the gathering'? That's something that's yet to happen.

Tonight I want to talk to you about another temple. Go to your Bible dictionary and look under the word 'temple'. I want to share with you something there, and this will take the remainder of our time. It says this, and just the first paragraph is all I want to talk about. *A temple is literally a house of the Lord, a holy sanctuary in which sacred ceremonies and ordinances of the gospel are performed by and for the living and also in behalf of the dead.* (and this part right here) *A place where the Lord may come, it is the most holy of any place of worship on the earth. Only the home can compare with the temple in sacredness.* I don't think there is any of us that don't have a witness that every dedicated temple, that when it's accepted by the Lord, and I assume all the temples that have been dedicated by the First Presidency, have been accepted by the Lord, that he has set His foot in those buildings. He has personally been in those buildings. It says, "*A place where the Lord may come, it is the most holy of any place of worship on the earth.*" (This part right here, underline this) *Only the home can compare with the temple in sacredness.*

Now that paragraph right there, you want to look at. So, I'd like to talk to you a little bit about the 'home'. My thinking on this is... I gave a lesson a couple of weeks ago in Priesthood, and it was about "Protecting the Family". We discussed that the family is the most sacred unit in eternity. The ideal family life on earth is patterned after family life in heaven. Of all the terms that God the Father is referred to, and he has many, he is a man of many names, the one that he prefers is "Father". I might also add that "husband" is right up there. Husband and Father. We got to thinking about what are the most holy places on the earth, when the Lord says in Section 45, he says, "Stand ye in holy places and be not moved". We talked about what "holy places" means, what they are. Of course, temples rated right up there and some men in the High Priest Group said homes should be holy places. I agreed with that. Actually, a 'holy place' is anywhere a holy man and a holy woman, a holy man and woman, a couple who have been justified, sanctified and cleansed from sin, wherever they stand and place their feet is holy ground. We asked the question, "Where is the place where children spend the most time out of these places?" Temples, stake buildings, ward buildings, or in the home? The obvious answer was, "in the home".

The job is to protect the family in generating circumstances of the world. And, it is. It's deteriorating before our very eyes. The place where children have the greatest exposure to their parents is not in the temple. It's in the home. So, I got to thinking about this principle and wondered what can we do, then, brothers and sisters, to turn our home into a temple place? The Bible

dictionary says that "only the home can compare to the temple in sacredness".

I'd like to give you a little thought. The word 'temple' also has within it the meaning of 'template'. A template is a pattern. Could it be that the temples are designed to be a pattern and a template, so we can make our homes temple places? I heard a man once tell me, and I agree with him, that the temple is not the real deal. That's not taking anything sacred away from it, but it's emphasizing what the temple is trying to do. The temple is not the 'real deal', the temple is pointing us to the real deal. If we start to contemplate what's going on in our temple worship, we can see that it's pointing us somewhere, always upward. It's a 'template'. So, for years and years, you could not dedicate your home through a priesthood ordinance until that home was paid for and any financial obligations/mortgages on it were paid off. That was in the handbook of instruction for years and years. Over the last few years as a missionary, I've had the opportunity to have access to the Blue Handbook of Instructions. There is a red handbook for general leadership, and then there's the blue handbook that's only for bishops, stake presidents, mission presidents, general authorities, etc. I've had the opportunity to read that book several times. One of the things it says is that now you can dedicate your home, through a priesthood ordinance, without it being paid off. So, that was a change from earlier handbooks. You can dedicate your home.

I would like to talk to you tonight about starting the process of turning your home into a 'temple place', every bit as sacred and purposeful as any temple, built and dedicated by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In my mind, I can see the need for no difference between those edifices and our home. It all depends on whether you start this concept to look at. Now, if you're talking about for the living, that's one thing. Of course we don't do vicarious work for the dead in our homes. I'm talking about making your home a 'temple safe place' for you and for your family, each mother and father presiding over those who have a claim on this home as a sanctuary and a safe place. And, then, spreading that out so it goes out to your posterities, so that when they get married, they can do the same things. Zion as a principle, is not going to be established by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It's not going to do it. It's teaching us concepts and principles that when you act on them as individual members of the Church, who have access to church membership conferences and canons of scripture that when a man or a woman can come up to a Zion status, wherever they are, you have Zion. Zion is the pure in heart. It has nothing to do with buildings, institutions, or real estate, at least, in the beginning. It begins with a man and a woman coming up, and obtaining these things were talking about tonight, and in every podcast. If the spirit, as you're reading the scriptures, and you're studying Isaiah (and one of the central messages of Isaiah is the establishment of the cause of Zion) if, as you're reading this and the spirit weighs upon you, and you have views concerning yourself, your family, and the Zion concept, you should consider yourself as having received the call to Zion, because that call is issued through the Spirit. It is not issued through any kind of decree sent out from an institution. It is spiritual in nature.

There is a gathering taking place right now, and people are feeling and hearing this call to Zion right now, as they listen to general conference, and one of the prophets or one of the Brethren may say something that is Zion-centered, and you may have the Spirit of the Lord bestill upon you, and have a view of you and the future that you've never had before. That is a call to Zion. To answer that call begins with individual sanctity. All the things we've been talking about, it begins with you becoming clean through the atonement of Christ, and having a new heart in Christ, and all the things that talk about that.

What help is your environment? Let's talk about you dedicating your home. Now, sisters, this is a Melchizedek Priesthood ordinance. If you don't have a husband, you can have someone you trust, someone that's a Melchizedek Priesthood holder, come in and perform this ordinance for you. Margie and I have done this a number of times, because we were gone on missions, and our home that had been dedicated, had been defiled. So, we had to re-dedicate our home, and we've done that several times. Let me just share with you things you may want to consider. How do I proceed on this? The ordinance is done like all ordinances in the Church. The ordinance begins by addressing the Father and ends in the name of Jesus Christ. The only other thing in there that's used is, as you address the Father, and begin the dedication of your home, you call upon the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood. Then, simply speak the words, you can read the prayer from that point forward, then end it in the name of Jesus Christ. That is all of the guidance you need, in order to do that. Now, what's in between is the interesting part. Here is something that I would recommend that you do. I was talking to the Stake President in Mongolia the other day. He said he wanted to dedicate his home and we talked about some of these things. He had not done it, and wanted to do it. "How do I proceed?"

I asked what his favorite temple was. He said it was the Hawaiian temple, but his temple district is Hong Kong. I told him to go online and find the dedicatory prayers for these temples. The Kirtland Temple is your foundational one, in Section 109 in the D&C. Read the prayers of your favorite temples. Study them. Let that be a study for you, to go over them and get a feeling for what an inspired dedicatory prayer is. What does it feel like? What's included within the words? You'll get a feel for that. Maybe you'll want to do 2-3 of those. I know when I did this, I read 5-6 of them. I just went online, and found the one for the SLC Temple, the Mesa, Az Temple one, the Snowflake, AZ Temple (which is my temple district), and I looked at these. Then Margie and I began a fast and before the fast was ended, I sat down at my computer, said a little prayer, and asked the Lord to reveal to me the words of the dedication for the home of Mike and Margie Stroud. I sat down, fasting, and had that prayer, and the words just flowed. This is a wonderful experience, brothers and sisters, this is so to be desired for. It is revelation that comes to you, and ask for the Spirit to dictate to you, word for word, sentence for sentence, and paragraph for paragraph. And, it just flows. When I was through, there were 2 complete pages written, single spaced. When I got through, I took it to Margie and had her proofread it and asked if she could see any errors in it, to let me know what needed to be fixed

up or changed. She went through it, as it was given to me, and it probably took me about 30 minutes to write it, and it stood as it was given. She didn't find any changes to make. After we received that dedication prayer, we discussed when we would dedicate the house. So, another time of fasting, we simply went upstairs and knelt down next to our bed. I put the written prayer on the bed in front of me, and read the prayer, and dedicated our home. I can tell you that that makes such a difference in the atmosphere of the home. It makes such a difference. I might also say, for your consideration, you might want to have a good housecleaning before this dedication. Clean it up, because, our God, brothers and sisters, is a God of order and not a God of confusion. You don't want angels to come to your house and be ashamed and cover their face because the environment is not Godly. So what you can do now, is dedicate your home, and that places a shield around it. Let the Spirit guide you. This is one reason you look at all these prayers on LDS temple dedications. You get a feeling for what the wording is from the prophets and apostles that helped dedicate these holy places. That's the beginning of turning your home into a 'temple place'. In my mind, it should be every bit as sacred. You should be able to, and even with little children I know that it's more difficult, but you should be able to enter into that home and feel the atmosphere in your home that you sense when you go into a temple of the Lord.

Comment from Rose Marie. Mike: I think we're going to hear more and more of those kind of things (concerning dedicating our homes with the authority of the Priesthood) through instruction from our church leadership, because I believe that we're going to need to have that protection and that atmosphere and you'll find out that angels will come, seen and unseen, and will reside in your home. If you look at the temple ceremony, there is a pattern there of angels, who are sent from Christ, down to observe what is going on in the telestial world. They observe and then they go back and say, "Lord, this is what we've seen." They return and report. Then the Lord brings this word to the Father. That's a correct principle. Here's a promise I want to make you. As you draw nearer to the Lord: you start to make these moves, you start to act in ways that the Spirit directs you, to sanctify your home and everything in it, that is something that is so rarely done in the telestial world, that it will attract the attention of angels. They will come and see something being done in your home that is so rare, not only in the Church, but especially in the population of the world, that they will immediately return and report to the Lord and say, "Master, we have been down as thou hast commanded and what we've seen, we feel you need to see. You need to come and see this." Angels open up the way for the Savior to come down and observe what's going on in your home. Angels are the precursor to a personal visit by the Lord, Jesus Christ. They are the ones that clear the way. As I said before, there are examples of where they come into the dwelling space of mortals and have to cover their eyes and are ashamed at what they see. We don't want that. We want to turn that around. We want them to come and observe the conditions in our homes, and then return to the Lord, Jesus Christ and say, "Master, you need to see this." Then He comes and observes that and presents it to the Father. That is the key that opens the door for all of the blessings of the fulness of the priesthood. This should be a personal, revelatory experience. The difference in your home is stunning. That's the word I would use. It's a stunning difference to compare before the dedicatory prayer, and after. And, the more effort you put into this to be spiritually prepared, the greater the experience you're going to have. But, it is a stunning difference before and after. Boy, do we need that sanctity in the days that are unfolding. I think, brothers and sisters, there is no time to lose. I don't know about you, but I feel a quiet urgency. No panic, and not to be done in haste, but I feel a quiet urgency that we need to be about, first of all, obtaining Zion status for ourselves and for our family. Anything we can do in the environment where they reside, to help that, is only a tremendous benefit. That's the purpose of homes being dedicated.

So, thank you very much and next week, maybe we'll talk a little bit more along these lines. Those are my thoughts for tonight. I think it will be a help for all of us to pursue that, and to make our homes holy places where we can stand and not be moved, as the Lord commands in Section 45.